

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FUKUOKA 6947

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJ: LOCAL REACTION TO LOCKHEED INCIDENT

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN PAST WEEK OR SO, WE HAVE DISCUSSED LOCKHEED CASE WITH VARIETY OF JAPANESE WHOSE OPINIONS WE RESPECT, INCLUDING A CONSERVATIVE YOUNG DIETMAN, OTHER POLITICIANS, AND A VARIETY OF MEDIA AND BUSINESS PEOPLE. JAPANESE INTEREST SEEMS AS HIGH AS WE HAVE SEEN REGARDING ANYTHING, AND CONSENSUS IS THAT IT IS MAJOR BLOW TO NOT ONLY LDP BUT CONSERVATIVE POLITICS. WHILE OUR IMPRESSIONS ARE NOT MUCH DIFFERENT THAN THOSE WE SEE IN TOKYO PAPERS, WE OFFER COMMENTS FROM FUKUOKA FOR WHAT THEY ARE WORTH. END SUMMARY.

1. JAPANESE INTEREST IN LOCKHEED STORY HAS BEEN INTENSE,

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AND IS ILLUSTRATED BY CONVERSATION PRINOFF HAD WITH YOUNG CONSERVATIVE DIETMAN TAKU YAMASAKI FEBRUARY 11. YAMASAKI, WHO IS EX-LEADER GRANTEE AND HAS ALWAYS STRUCK US AS BEING ONE OF MOST PROMISING YOUNG POLITICIANS WE HAVE SEEN, ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF ALLEGED MISCONDUCT BY COMPANY'S EXECUTIVES. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO, YAMASAKI IS NO DOUBT WORRIED ABOUT IMPLICATIONS OF CASE ON HIS OWN FUTURE, SINCE HE FINISHED FOURTH IN RACE FOR FIVE SEATS IN 1973 LOWER CONFIDENTIAL

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HOUSE ELECTION OF FUKUOKA'S FIRST DISTRICT. YAMASAKI ALSO

SAID NO QUESTION THAT INCIDENT HAS ALREADY HURT TRUST OF PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT.

2. THIS OPINION THAT INCIDENT HAS HURT TRUST OF PEOPLE ALSO VOICED BY KURUME MAYOR TOSHIYUKI CHIKAMI, WHO SAID FEBRUARY 12 THAT THE CONSERVATIVES WILL BE HURT IN NEXT LOWER HOUSE ELECTION. ELECTION WILL OF COURSE BE POSTPONED, CHIKAMI SAID, BUT HE STILL FEARED CONSERVATIVES WOULD LOSE SEATS.

3. MASAMI OKANO, PRESIDENT OF OKANO VALVE, AND A DIRECTOR OF THE KYUSHU-YAMAGUCHI ECONOMIC FEDERATION, SAID FEBRUARY 13 THAT HE KNEW MARUBENI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TOSHIHARU OKUBO VERY WELL. "HE'S A FINE MAN AND I'M PRETTY SURE THAT HE WOULDN'T BE

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DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ANYTHING ILLEGAL," OKANO SAID. "HOWEVER, THE WAY TRADING COMPANIES DO BUSINESS IS SO COMPLICATED THAT HE MIGHT UNKNOWINGLY HAVE SIGNED SOMETHING HE SHOULDN'T HAVE."

OKANO SAID THAT JAPANESE POLITICIANS MUST ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION TO ELIMINATE SUCH PRACTICES, BUT ADMITTED HE DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS MUCH CHANCE OF THIS HAPPENING. OKANO SAID ALL POLITICIANS ENGAGE IN CORRUPT PRACTICES, AND THAT THE LDP IS NOT THE ONLY GUILTY ONE. HE SAID THAT SINCE THE LDP IS THE PARTY INVOLVED IN THE PRESENT INCIDENT, THIS FACT WOULD DO THE PARTY LITTLE GOOD, CONSIDERING THE PUBLIC UPROAR IT NOW FACES.

4. EXPENSE ACCOUNT MENTALITY WAS BLAMED BY ANOTHER LOCAL BUSINESSMAN, SEIKEN KOGYO PRESIDENT ISAMU NAMITA, FOR CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE THAT LED TO THE ALLEGED CORRUPTION. NAMITA SAID THAT JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN ARE ENCOURAGED, WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL, TO USE THEIR EXPENSE ACCOUNTS TO THE HILT. THEY ENGAGE IN QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES UNDER BUSINESS PRETEXTS AND GRADUALLY LOSE THE ABILITY TO KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG, NAMITA SAID. LIKE EVERYONE ELSE WHO RAISED THE SUBJECT, HE SAID THAT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GREAT. HE ADDED THAT A SIMILAR INCIDENT IN THE TAISHO ERA INVOLVING THE SIEMENS

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COMPANY IN HOLLAND HAD LED TO THE DOWNFALL OF THE GOVERNMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND THAT THIS COULD HAPPEN OVER THE LOCKHEED INCIDENT.

5. NAMITA WENT ON TO SAY THAT TWO MAJOR BENEFICIARIES OF THE PRESS COVERAGE WERE JCP CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO AND THE COMBINED OPPOSITION PARTIES. NEWS ABOUT MIYAMOTO'S ALLEGED LYNCHING HAD BEEN SUPERSEDED, HE SAID, AND THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD BEEN GIVEN AN EXPLOSIVE ISSUE WITH WHICH TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE, NAMITA SAID, BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO DIVERT THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST FROM MORE

IMPORTANT ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE OPPOSITION COULD, AND SHOULD, CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT ON THE SLOW RECOVERY OF THE ECONOMY. IN ADDITION, THE UNEXPECTED ASCENSION OF HUA IN THE PRC AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF USSR-JAPAN RELATIONS IN THE WAKE OF GROMYKO'S VISIT SHOULD BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED, NAMITA CLAIMED. HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE NOT COME UP WITH A GOOD PLAN FOR ADDRESSING ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, AND THEREFORE HAVE GLEEFULLY SEIZED UPON THE LOCKHEED INCIDENT, AT THE EXPENSE OF SERVING THE JAPANESE PUBLIC THEY REPRESENT, HE CONCLUDED. COMMENT: IT IS OF COURSE TOO EARLY TO SAY ANYTHING DEFINITIVE ABOUT POLITICAL IMPACT OF CURRENT BROUHAHA. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS

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WORTH NOTING THAT CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE ANY VOTES IN KYUSHU-YAMAGUCHI. BEFORE CURRENT UPROAR, LDP HAD BEEN IN FAIRLY GOOD SHAPE, IN SPITE OF RETIREMENT OF TWO INCUMBENT LOWER HOUSE MEMBERS AND DEATH OF EISAKU SATO. LOCAL PAPERS HAD SPECULATED THAT LDP HAD CHANCE TO PICK UP SEAT IN FUKUOKA'S SECOND AND THIRD DISTRICTS, IF EX-DIETMEN KATSUYUKI ONIMARU RAN IN FORMER AND SUJI KURAUCHI IN LATTER. IN ADDITION, LDP WAS SEEN AS HAVING CHANCE TO PICK UP SEAT IN MIYAZAKI VACATED BY RETIRING DSP MEMBER RYOICHI ORIONO. WEAKEST SPOT IN KYUSHU WAS SEEN AS BEING FUKUOKA'S FIRST DISTRICT, WHERE PERENNIAL PLETHORA OF CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES GAVE CHANCE TO OPPOSITION TO PICK UP SEAT. WHILE TOP TWO OR THREE SEATS IN EACH OF FUKUOKA PREFECTURE'S ELECTORAL DISTRICTS FAIRLY EASY TO PREDICT, RACES HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN CLOSE FOR REMAINING ONE OR TWO SEATS. IF LOCKHEED INCIDENT NOT SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED, DAMAGE TO CONSERVATIVES'S CHANCES IN NEXT ELECTION COULD BE GREAT. NOT ONLY HAS ALMOST CERTAIN POSTPONEMENT OF LOWER HOUSE DISSOLUTION REDUCED LDP'S CONFIDENTIAL

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FLEXIBILITY, OPPOSITION CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN GIVEN A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO RUN AGAINST BIG BUSINESS AND BIG GOVERNMENT

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RATHER THAN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONSERVATIVE OPPONENTS. END COMMENT.

RICHARDSON

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